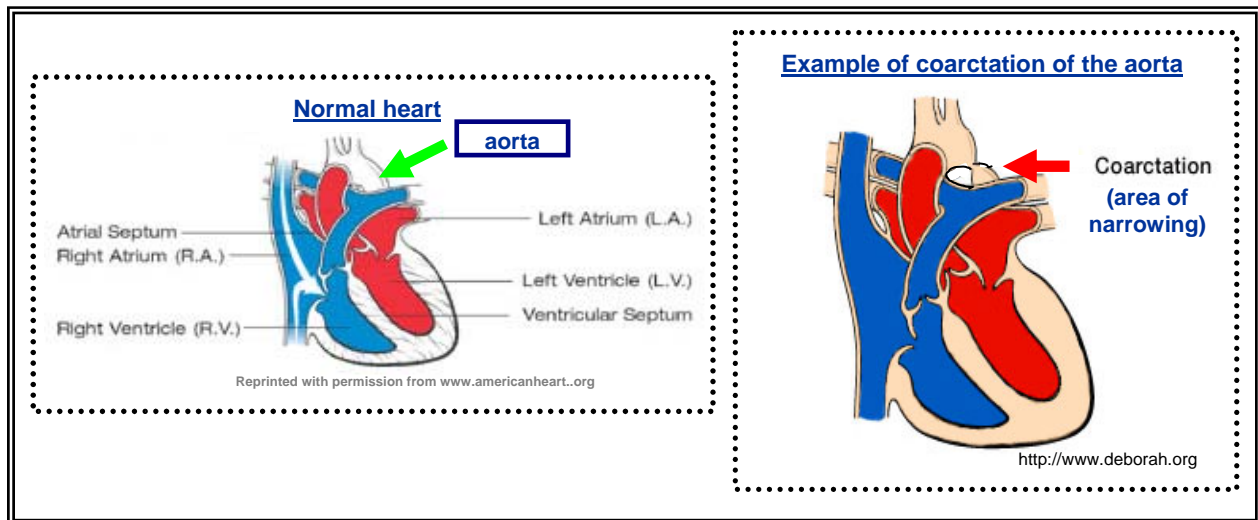


Coarctation of the Aorta

What is coarctation of the aorta?

Coarctation of the aorta occurs when there is a **narrowing of the aorta** (the main artery that sends oxygen-rich blood out of the heart) which blocks blood flow to the body. The heart may be enlarged because it must pump harder to get blood to the body. Coarctations most often occur as isolated defects (no other birth defects are present), but may occur with other heart defects.

Approximately 5 – 10% of all children with congenital (present at birth) heart defects have coarctation of the aorta.



What causes coarctation of the aorta?

Currently, the exact cause of coarctation of the aorta is not known. Heredity likely plays a role in the development of all heart defects, meaning that if someone had a congenital heart defect, he or she has an increased chance of having a child with a heart defect.

How is coarctation of the aorta treated?

Surgery may be needed to correct the defect, depending on the severity of the coarctation and the presence of other congenital defects. Your child's doctor(s) will discuss appropriate treatment options with you.

For more information

American Heart Association - <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=11105>

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's Heart Center Encyclopedia -

<http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/health/heart-encyclopedia/default.htm>

MedlinePlus - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/congenitalheartdefects.html>

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute - http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/chd/chd_what.html

Sources: Cincinnati Children's Hospital, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute